

January/February 2012

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Presidents: Power & Possibilities

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As always, we welcome your comments and suggestions. Please send your feedback to Ms. Linda K. Parker, Information Resource Officer, Public Affairs Section, U.S. Embassy, The American Center, 24 Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi 110001.

Note: Internet sites included in this publication, other than those of the U.S. government, should not be construed as an endorsement of the views contained therein.

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Presidents: Power & Possibilities

The office of the president of the United States is one of the most powerful in the world. On the one hand the U.S. president has been vested with immense power, while on the other he has enormous responsibilities. The president, the U.S. Constitution says, must "take care that the laws be faithfully executed." To carry out this responsibility, he presides over the executive branch of the federal government. In addition, the president has important legislative and judicial powers, too.

The powers of the president of the United States are set forth in Article II of the U.S. Constitution. Some of these powers the president can exercise in his own right, without formal legislative approval. Others require the consent of the Senate or Congress as a whole. The U.S. president also acts as head of state and Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces. As Commander-in-Chief, the president controls the military forces. Presidents have also cited this power as extending to their control of national and foreign policy in war and peacetime. Congress may not restrain the president's power to pardon, except in impeachment cases. The power vested in the president of the United States by the U.S. Constitution could broadly be categorized into national security powers, legislative powers, administrative powers, and judicial powers.

Within the executive branch itself, the president has broad powers to manage national affairs and the workings of the federal government. The president can issue rules, regulations, and instructions called executive orders, which have the binding force of law upon federal agencies but do not require congressional approval. As Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces of the United States, the president may also call into federal service the state units of the National Guard. He can authorize the use of troops overseas without declaring war. To declare war officially, though, he must get the approval of the Congress. He can also make treaties with other nations; however, the Senate must approve any treaty before it becomes official. The president nominates—and the Senate confirms—the heads of all executive departments and agencies, together with hundreds of other high-ranking federal officials.

Despite the constitutional provision that "all legislative powers" shall be vested in the Congress, the president, as the chief formulator of public policy, has a major legislative role. He

recommends legislation to Congress. However, he cannot write bills. He can propose a bill, but a member of Congress must submit it for him. President can veto any bill passed by Congress and, unless two-thirds of the members of each house vote to override the veto, the bill does not become law.

By virtue of the administrative powers vested in him, the president is responsible for faithful execution of the laws. Under the Constitution, the president is the federal official primarily responsible for the relations of the United States with foreign nations. The president appoints ambassadors, ministers, and consuls with the agreement of a majority of the Senate. He also receives foreign ambassadors and other public officials. With the secretary of state, the president manages all official contacts with foreign governments. Through the Department of State, the president is responsible for the protection of Americans abroad and of foreign nationals in the United States. The president decides whether to recognize new nations and new governments, and negotiates treaties with other nations, which become binding on the United States when approved by two-thirds of the Senate.

Judicial powers of the president authorize him to appoint important public officials. He appoints the Supreme Court justices and federal judges with the agreement of the majority of the Senate. Another significant power of the president is that of granting a full or conditional pardon to anyone convicted of breaking a federal law-except in a case of impeachment.

However, regardless of such power vested in the president, there are certain constraints of the presidential powers. The vast array of presidential roles and responsibilities, coupled with a corresponding presence on the national and international scene, political analysts have placed great emphasis on the president's powers. One of the first sobering realities a new president discovers is an inherited bureaucratic structure that can be difficult to manage and slow to change direction. New presidents are immensely confronted with a backlog of decisions from the outgoing administration. They inherit a budget formulated and enacted into law long before they come to office, as well as major spending programs, which are mandated by law. In foreign affairs, presidents must comply with treaties and informal agreements negotiated by their predecessors in office. As the happy euphoria of the post-election "honeymoon" dissipates, the new president discovers that Congress has become less cooperative and the media more critical. It becomes necessary that compromises with Congress be struck if any legislation is to be adopted. "It is very

easy to defeat a bill in Congress," lamented President John F. Kennedy. "It is much more difficult to pass one."

Despite these constraints every president achieves at least some of his legislative goals and prevents by veto the enactment of other laws he believes not to be in America's best interests. The president's authority in the conduct of war and peace, including the negotiation of treaties is substantial. A president's power and influence may be limited but they are also greater than those of any other American, in or out of office.

In this issue, we seek to discuss various aspects of the U.S. presidential powers and how different presidents have addressed the contemporary challenges within the boundaries of their constitutional rights. The articles included in this section present a broad overview of the topic.

For additional information, a webliography is presented here for your use. The inclusion of Internet sites other than those of the U.S. government should not be construed as an endorsement of the views contained therein. The websites are current as of publication date and are subject to change at any time.

Webliography

The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden

<http://americanhistory.si.edu/PRESIDENCY/home.html>

The American Presidency Project

<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>

American President Quotes

http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/category/american_president.html

Avalon Project: The Papers of the Presidents

http://avalon.law.yale.edu/subject_menus/presiden.asp

Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies

<http://www.american.edu/spa/ccps/>

Center for the Study of the Presidency and Congress

<http://www.thepresidency.org/>

Codification of Presidential Proclamations and Executive Orders

<http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/>

Commission on Presidential Debates

<http://www.debates.org/>

Hauenstein Center for Presidential Studies

<http://www.gvsu.edu/hauenstein/>

Kids.gov "How Do I Become President" Challenge

<http://becomepresident.challenge.gov/>

Miller Center

<http://millercenter.org/>

National First Ladies' Library

<http://www.firstladies.org/>

A New Era of Responsibility: Renewing America's Promise

<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/usbudget/fy10/pdf/fy10-newera.pdf>

Obama Today

<http://blogs.america.gov/obama>

Peter S. Kalikow Center for the Study of the American Presidency

<http://www.hofstra.edu/academics/colleges/hclas/prssty/>

Presidential Debate History

<http://cgi.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1996/debates/history/>

Presidential Directives and Executive Orders

<http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/direct.htm>

Presidential Libraries and Museums

<http://www.presidentsusa.net/libraries.html>

Presidential Quotes

<http://www.presidential-quotes.com/index.php>

Presidential Rhetoric

<http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com>

The Presidential Timeline of the Twentieth Century

<http://www.presidentialtimeline.org/>

President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition

<http://www.fitness.gov/>

The Presidents

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents>

Presidents of the United States: Resource Guides

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/bib/presidents/index.html>

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<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/pubpapers/index.html>

Running for President of the United States of America 2012
Election

www.ncsbe.gov/getdocument.aspx?ID=308

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The White House -- Foreign Policy

http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/foreign_policy

The White House -- President Barack Obama

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/president-obama/>

The White House

<http://www.whitehouse.gov>

1. BILL CLINTON'S CONTRACTARIAN WORLDVIEW: THE INTELLECTUAL ORIGINS AND PUBLIC FACE OF THE CLINTON PHILOSOPHY

By David J. Siemers. Congress & the Presidency, v. 35, no. 2, Autumn 2008, pp. 65-86.

Whether Bill Clinton possessed a consistent governing philosophy or worldview has been a bone of contention among political scientists. Many of Clinton's political rivals blamed him for lacking consistency and acting on the basis of expediency. Even some of his political partners including Robert Reich, Dick Gephardt David Gergen, and Dick Morris also endorsed this view. However, some journalists and academicians have argued in a revisionist vein. They believe that Clinton possessed political principles and he tried to govern with them in mind. According to Thomas B. Edsall (2000), as a candidate Clinton successfully combined "Cultural conservatism with economic populism," a potent mix which gained him the Whitehouse.

2. THE CARTER SYNDROME

By Walter Russell Mead. Foreign Policy, v. 177, January/February 2010, pp. 58-64.

In this article, Mead talks about the foreign policy of President Barack Obama. The author believes that Obama, like most other U.S. presidents, has a split personality when it comes to foreign policy. Many U. S. presidents are influenced by the philosophies of former U.S. Presidents Woodrow Wilson, Thomas Jefferson, and Andrew Jackson, and former U.S. Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton. Mead argues that Obama needs to reconcile his conflicting impulses to promote goods abroad and withdraw from foreign entanglements. Failure to do so, according to the author, could make Obama's foreign policy as ineffective as that of former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

3. CONSTITUTIONALISM AND PRESIDENTIAL PREROGATIVE: JEFFERSONIAN AND HAMILTONIAN PERSPECTIVES

By Clement Fatovic. American Journal of Political Science, v. 48, no. 3, July 2004, pp. 429-444.

Fatovic focuses on the prevailing ambivalence about prerogative, the power of U.S. Presidents to take extraordinary actions without explicit legal authorization in extraordinary situations,

which seems to be at loggerheads with the basic principles of liberal constitutionalism. The author examines the benefits and the perils of prerogative and compares it with the liberal constitutionalism by comparing the position and approaches of Thomas Jefferson and Alexander Hamilton, who are often thought to hold diametrically opposed views regarding the proper role of the executive in a constitutional order. Despite their differences, they agreed in general that the president may legitimately exercise prerogative powers in genuine cases of emergency.

4. THE CONTEMPORARY PRESIDENCY: THE RETURN OF THE HONEYMOON: TELEVISION NEWS COVERAGE OF NEW PRESIDENTS, 1981-2009

By Stephen J. Farnsworth and S. Robert Lichter: Presidential Studies Quarterly, v. 41, no. 3, September 2011, pp; 590-603.

This paper analyzes the television news coverage of first years of presidencies of Obama, Bush, Clinton, and Reagan. Through an analysis of network television evening news reports from Obama's first year, it determines whether the relatively positive treatment that Obama received during his presidential campaign was carried over to his first year in office. The statistics reveal that the presidential honeymoon, frequently considered a thing of the past, returned with the arrival of the Obama administration. The paper also concludes that Obama's coverage has been more positive than that of his last three predecessors in the White House during a partisan transfer of power.

5. FAITH AND SEX, PRESIDENTS UNDER PRESSURE: ELECTORAL COALITIONS AND STRATEGIC PRESIDENTS

By Barbara Morris and Noelle Norton, v. 35, no. 1, Spring 2008, pp. 1-27.

Morris and Norton discuss how U.S. presidents have restructured the Executive Office of the President (EOP) to best suit their needs and to pacify interests they perceive to be critical to their political and electoral success. They closely examine the creation of the White House Office of Women's Initiatives and Outreach (WHOWIO) and Bush's creation of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (WHOFBCI) suggesting how U.S. presidents are more willing than ever to use all tools at their disposal including

the restructuring of the EOP, to demonstrate a commitment to particularized interests. The article explores both Clinton's and Bush's motivations for establishing offices for women and religious groups. The authors argue that politicalization and centralization coupled with the expansion of the EOP encourage presidents to create a responsive bureaucracy and also enable them to create agencies that function quietly under their watchful eye.

6. GETTING TO KNOW GEORGE WASHINGTON

By Edward Countryman. Southwest Review, v. 94, no. 2, 2009, pp. 132-146.

In this article, Countryman discusses the life of America's first President, George Washington especially his ability to grow and change. According to him, the Marmoreal Washington Monument is illusory if we would understand Washington and his time. Despite internal tension, Washington remade himself, again and again.

7. IS IT A HONEYMOON? AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE PRESIDENT'S FIRST HUNDRED DAYS

By Casey Byrne Knudsen Dominguez. Congress & the Presidency, v. 32, no. 1, pp. 63-78.

This paper analyses the popular hypothesis that the first one hundred days of a U.S. presidency are characterized by a "honeymoon" with the Congress. Although first hundred days is an arbitrary benchmark, it has historical roots and popular appeal. During his first hundred days a new president is more likely to get what he wants from Congress. Author tests this hypothesis and reveals that presidents do win more votes on legislation they favor during the first hundred days of a presidency. Another finding of this study is that the president's relationship with Congress is most dramatically improved for presidents who face divided government.

8. THE POLICY-DRIVEN LEADERSHIP OF JAMES K. POLK: MAKING THE MOST OF A WEAK PRESIDENCY

By Fred I. Greenstein. Presidential Studies Quarterly, v. 40, no. 4, December 2010, pp. 725-733.

James Knox Polk, the 11th president of the United States has been an interesting focus for the study of presidential

leadership because of his paradoxical combination of success and failure characterizing the conduct of his responsibilities. While he was highly successful in accomplishing his short-run goals, he failed to anticipate the longer-run consequences that acquiring extensive territory from Mexico would have on relations between the slave and free states. He was more effective at bringing his policies into existence than at anticipating their consequences. This article reviews Polk's formative years, pre-presidential political career, and presidency to assess his strengths, and weaknesses in the realms of public communication, organizational capacity, political skills, policy vision, cognitive style, and emotional intelligence.

9. PRESIDENTS AS COMMENDERS IN CHIEF: RECOGNITIONS OF CITIZEN HEROES FROM RONALD REAGAN THROUGH GEORGE W. BUSH

By John R. Vile. Congress & the Presidency, v. 34, no. 1, Spring 2007, pp. 27-54.

The development of television offered a great opportunity for the U.S. presidents to reach out to the American people and engage with them on a wide range of matters. Through this medium they maintained more frequent and more personal contact with the American people. Kennedy started appearing on this medium year round. The trend was followed by Johnson, Nixon, Ford, and Carter. They, too, spoke frequently to the American people. It was Ronald Reagan who used this medium as effectively as Kennedy. With his acting background, Reagan had the instinctive sense of communicating in front of television cameras. He started the practice of inviting contemporary citizen heroes to attend his televised speeches to Congress and recognizing them by name. Subsequent presidents also employed this skill. This paper takes a look at the history and implications of this rhetorical innovation and also draws some lessons about the practice for the future.

10. PUBLIC BIOETHICS AND THE BUSH PRESIDENCY

By O Carter Snead. Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy, v. 32, no. 3, Summer 2009, pp. 867-913.

"Bioethics, which emerged in America as a field of scholarly reflection in the 1960s, figured prominently during the tenure of President George W. Bush. This article explores the legacy of Bush in bioethics. It discusses President Bush's approach to public bioethics and analyzes how his norms were applied to

concrete areas of concern. It concludes with a brief synopsis of the possible metrics by which the Bush Administration's efforts might be judged. It depicts that the American presidency offers an extraordinary array of mechanisms by which the holder of that office can put his stamp on this domain, effectively embedding a particular set of ethical goods in the fabric of the law.

11. THINK AGAIN RONALD REAGAN

By Peter Beinart. Foreign Policy, v. 180, July/August 2010, pp. 28-33.

Conservatives have often referred to Reagan as a president and a person who never compromised with America's enemies and never shrank from a fight. However, Peter Beinart feels to the contrary. According to him, the real Reagan did both the things, which in fact was a key factor of his success. Beinart says that Reagan was terrified of war and he quotes many instances to support his argument.

12. WAR POWERS RESOLUTION: PRESIDENTIAL COMPLIANCE

By Richard E. Grumm. CRS Report for Congress, March 25, 2011, 20 p.

This Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress discusses two issues that have confronted U.S. Congress whenever the U.S. introduces armed forces into a situation abroad that might be construed as hostilities or imminent hostilities. The first issue concerns division of war powers between the President and the Congress, whether the use of armed forces falls within the purview of the congressional power to declare war and the War Powers Resolution (WPR). The second issue is whether or not Congress concurs in the wisdom of the action. Rather than dealing with the substantive merits of using armed forces in specific cases, this CRS report focuses on congressional authorization for military actions and the application and effectiveness of WPR.

13. THE FINANCIAL REBALANCING ACT: STOP WORRYING ABOUT THE GLOBAL FLOW OF CAPITAL

By Alan M. Taylor. Foreign Affairs, v. 90, no. 4, July/August 2011, pp. 91-99.

According to Alan Taylor, a senior adviser at Morgan Stanley, the capital flow imbalance between developed and emerging economies is already adjusting. After the financial crises of the 1990s, emerging economies adopted policies for saving enormous official reserves as a way to cushion the next crisis. The odd result was that capital flowed from developing countries to wealthier developed countries, a historic reversal. The lower interest rates from the "savings glut" encouraged excessive financial risk taking in developed countries, contributing to the 2007-2008 crisis and subsequent Great Recession. Having protected their economies through the crisis, emerging economies are now building reserves more slowly as they spend more money on internal investment, consumption, and social safety nets. Developed countries, meanwhile, are also saving less while spending more on aging populations. As the global savings glut subsides, global interest rates are rising, and the flow of capital is moving more in the direction of the rapidly expanding emerging economies.

14. MEET THE NEW OPTIMISTS

By Ellis Cose. Newsweek, v. 157, no. 22, May 23, May 23, 2011, pp. 14-15.

The economic crisis may be depressing for most Americans, but African-Americans remain amazingly upbeat, according to polls. Blacks were more likely than whites to say the economy was sound, according to CBS News. A Washington Post-Kaiser-Harvard poll found that 60 percent of blacks, compared to 36 percent of whites, believe that the standard of living will be better for their children. Obama's presidency has fueled optimism among many blacks, but even before Obama's election, the new generation of black achievers refused to believe they would be stymied by the bigotry that bedeviled their parents.

15. THE MYTH OF BASELOAD

By David Brown Kinloch. Kentucky.com, posted July 12, 2011.

<http://www.kentucky.com/2011/07/12/1809690/the-myth-of-baseload.html>

"Baseload" is a term that electric power utility companies use to describe centralized plants, usually coal- or nuclear-powered, with the lowest operating costs, that provide the bulk of a region's typical power demand. On days when demand is higher than normal, more expensive generators are brought online to provide the "peaking" load. Traditionally, utilities have dismissed renewables as being unable to reliably provide baseload power. However the author, an engineer, writes that radical change is coming to the utility industry, as the growing cost of fuels and increasing pollution controls make conventional coal- or nuclear-powered plants more expensive. Kinloch notes that coal and nuclear plants cannot be scaled back quickly during periods of lower usage, and doing so makes them less efficient. As to the supposed intermittency of renewable power, he notes that just as utility dispatchers estimate customer demand in advance using weather forecasts they can estimate the amount of power expected to be produced by solar or wind installations. Kinloch notes that the major obstacle is getting utility planners and dispatchers to think outside the mindset that baseload power must be delivered by conventional fossil or nuclear plants.

16. TOO BIG TO FAIL OR TOO BIG TO CHANGE?

By Chad Johnson. Harvard Law School Forum on Corporate Governance and Financial Regulation, June 25, 2011.

<http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/corpgov/2011/06/25/too-big-to-fail-or-too-big-to-change/>

The author, a partner with the law firm Bernstein Litowitz Berger & Grossmann LLP, writes that the investing public has grown frustrated with the lack of prosecutions of senior executives and companies responsible for the subprime mortgage meltdown and the resulting financial crisis of 2008. He notes that most of the settlements that the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Department of Justice (DoJ) have obtained from targeted firms and their executives have been far too lenient, and have been criticized by federal judges. Johnson lays the blame for the insufficient government action to the lack of funding for the SEC's and DoJ's enforcement operations, and a "revolving-door" environment between the Wall Street firms and the federal agencies responsible for their oversight. He believes that it is up to institutional investors and pension funds to fill the void, and seek redress for shareholders defrauded by corporate misconduct; several major pension funds are currently pursuing legal action against many of the major investment banks at the center of the 2008 financial collapse.

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL RELATIONS & SECURITY

17. THE ALL-AMERICAN

By James Traub. New York Times Magazine, July 17, 2011.

The author notes that after Barack Obama won the U.S. presidency in 2008, John Kerry, then the junior senator from Massachusetts, very much wanted to be named secretary of state, a job for which he felt qualified as a senior member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. However, Obama picked New York senator and former First Lady Hillary Clinton instead. In 2009, Kerry has been able to practice his own brand of diplomacy as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; he has become a kind of ex-officio member of Obama's national security team, which has dispatched him to conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Sudan. Kerry's willingness to travel anywhere he is needed, and stay as long as necessary, has won him Obama's gratitude.

18. FOR AMERICA, AN ARAB WINTER

By Aaron David Miller. Wilson Quarterly, v. 35, no. 3, Summer 2011, pp. 36-42.

The demands for change in the Arab world in recent months have created more uncertainty for the United States, notes the author. The fall of Arab autocrats creates more risks than opportunities and the Arab upheavals have narrowed the space in which the United States can pursue its policies and interests. In dealing with each Arab ruler or leader, the United States has struck a different balance between its values and interests. For example, the sweeping changes in the Arab world were a reminder to the Palestinians of how little their own situation had changed while the Arab monarchies, particularly those in the Persian Gulf, have survived without serious challenges.

19. NATO AFTER LIBYA: THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE IN AUSTERE TIMES

By Anders Fogh Rasmussen. Foreign Affairs, v. 90, no. 4, July/August 2011, pp. 2-6.

The author, secretary-general of NATO, writes that NATO's mission in Libya was the first large-scale military engagement since the global financial crisis erupted in 2008. Rasmussen notes that there were legitimate concerns on whether Europe would be able to respond, since NATO member countries have been drastically reducing their defense spending. However, Rasmussen notes, the

NATO coalition led an effective campaign, and any shortfalls were due to political, rather than military constraints. He writes that the Libya campaign revealed three important facts about military intervention today. First, is that military power still matters, and needs to be flexible to address the uncertainty in global conflict. Second, newly-emerging powers, such as Brazil, India and China, should not be seen as a threat to NATO—they have little interest in disrupting the global system on which their prosperity was created. Third, the transatlantic alliance remains the cornerstone of global security, which "enjoys more stakeholders than ever before and yet it has very few guarantors."

20. THE ULTIMATE ALLY

By Michael Oren. Foreign Policy, no. 186, May/June 2011, pp. 44-51.

The author, Israel's ambassador to the United States, argues that, with the upheaval in the Middle East, the U.S. needs Israel more than ever. He notes that Israel has sided with the U.S. through multiple conflicts over the past 60 years, and shares its global vision. Oren writes that American interest in a Jewish homeland is not recent; since colonial times, American statesmen have written and spoken about it. In a region where most countries are ruled by autocratic regimes and by leaders who consider themselves above the law, Israel alone has maintained a democratic tradition. The alliance with Israel has enabled the U.S. to minimize its commitment of military resources in the region; Israel is also one of our major economic partners. U.S. diplomats involved in Middle East affairs have never considered that the presence of the so-called "Israel lobby" has influenced their decision-making. As to the allegation that the U.S.-Israel alliance has stoked anger in the Arab world and made the U.S. more vulnerable to terrorism, Oren writes that Arab public opinion is more concerned with domestic issues, such as economic and democratic reform than enmity toward Israel.

21. WHY MIDDLE EAST STUDIES MISSED THE ARAB SPRING: THE MYTH OF AUTHORITARIAN STABILITY

By F Gregory Gause III. Foreign Affairs, v. 90, no. 4, July/August 2011, pp. 81-90.

The author, professor of political science at the University of Vermont, writes that the majority of specialists on the Arab world were taken aback by the upheavals in the Middle East during recent past. They realized that the authoritarian Arab regimes were very unpopular and faced serious problems. However, their focus was on explaining the persistence of these autocratic governments in the face

of numerous challenges. Gause writes that Middle East specialists need to find out the changes that undermined several decades of stability in the regimes of the Arab countries and sparked the revolts.

DEMOCRACY & HUMAN RIGHTS

22. MR. PRECEDENT

By Stephanie Mencimer. Mother Jones, v. 36, no. 3, May/June 2011, pp 54-57, 66.

Liberal reporter Stephanie Mencimer profiles conservative Indiana attorney James Bopp's efforts to change campaign finance laws. Bopp has been successful in his claims that campaign contributions are a form of free speech protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The Supreme Court extended the same free speech protections to corporations in the Citizens United v. FEC ruling. Bopp has many cases in the lower courts challenging money limits to campaign contributions. His law firm also has cases in 16 states challenging financial disclosure laws for campaign contributors.

23. THE STRUGGLE WITHIN ISLAM

By Robin Wright. Smithsonian, v. 42, no. 5, September 2011, pp. 104-114.

Extremists get the attention, but the forces of moderation are gaining ground among Muslims, Wright says. For the majority of Muslims today, the central issue is not a clash with other civilizations but rather a struggle to reclaim Islam's central values from a small but virulent minority. The new confrontation is effectively a jihad against The Jihad, says Wright. Militant Islam has failed to deliver constructive solutions to the basic challenges of everyday life. While the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States killed almost 3,000 people, Muslim militants have killed more than 10,000 of their brethren in region wide attacks in the decade since. In 2010, public opinion polls in major Muslim countries showed dramatic declines in backing for Al Qaeda. "Today, Al Qaeda is as significant to the Islamic world as the Ku Klux Klan is to the Americans—not much at all," says Ghada Shahbender, an Egyptian poet and activist. "They exist, but they're freaks."

24. THE DAWN OF THE HOMOGENOCENE

By Charles C. Mann. Orion, v. 30, no. 3, May/June 2011, pp. 16-25.

<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/6250/>

The author traces globalization to the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 and the establishment of the first stable colonies in the New World. Successive waves of explorers and settlers brought with them flora, fauna and pathogens that existed in Eurasia, but until that time were unknown in the Western Hemisphere. The world's ecosystems mixed as species were carried in treasure-seeking expeditions across the ocean in a phenomenon called the Columbian Exchange by historian Alfred W. Crosby. This brought death to inhabitants and destruction of native species. It also began the creation of the Homogenocene, a world ecosystem of sameness, which is also mirrored today economically by international corporations: "In the Homogenocene, Kentucky Fried Chicken, McDonald's, and Pizza Hut are always just minutes away."

25. LIVING ON THE EDGE

By Eric Wagner. Smithsonian, v. 42, no. 1, April 2011, pp. 54-59.

Despite being at war, North and South Korea are collaborating to save one of the world's most endangered bird species, the red-crowned crane, which is flourishing in the most unlikely place—the demilitarized zone (DMZ) between North and South. With massive military might arrayed on both sides, the DMZ has nonetheless emerged as a refuge for many threatened species, and is one of the few remaining areas unaffected by development in the South. The author profiles George Archibald, a world authority on cranes and founder of the International Crane Foundation, who has been working for 40 years to protect the cranes, and who has been one of the few Western scientists working with North Korea to rehabilitate areas in the North where cranes used to frequent. Many are urging that the DMZ be kept as an ecological reserve if Korea should ever reunite.

26. ON OVERCONFIDENCE

By James Fowler and Dominic Johnson. *Seed Magazine*, January 7, 2011.

http://seedmagazine.com/content/print/on_overconfidence/

The authors, instructors in political science at the University of California (San Diego) and Edinburgh University (Scotland), respectively, write that the human attribute of confidence is so essential for even the most everyday activities that we take it for granted. They note that it looms large to explain success of individuals in fields such as medicine, sports, entertainment and business; however, confidence, "like fire, can be extremely useful in controlled amounts, but overconfidence can easily burn out of control and cause costly errors." Events such as the 2008 financial collapse, foot-dragging on climate change and disastrous outcomes of wars have been blamed on overconfidence. They note that most people have "positive illusions" about their abilities or vulnerability to risk. The authors write that the dilemma of overconfidence is that it confers success and advantage even at the cost of occasional disasters. Unbounded overconfidence, however, can lead to so much conflict that no gain would be worth it. They write that our decision-making abilities evolved over eons in small hunter-gatherer groups, and are not always attuned to our modern, complex societies. The good news, they note, is that evolutionary reasoning suggests ways to avoid situations where overconfidence is likely to cause deleterious outcomes. Overconfidence can be encouraged in individual settings, such as entertainment or sports, but discouraged in situations where accurate assessment is more important, such as financial regulation, international conflict, climate change negotiations or mutual arms inspections. The authors conclude that "the modern world is very different from the one in which we evolved ... We may not be able to eliminate this bias in our decision-making, but it is crucial that we understand it and reset our institutions accordingly if we are to shake our long record of self-imposed disasters."

GLOBAL ISSUES

27. THE NEW GEOPOLITICS OF FOOD

By Lester R. Brown. *Foreign Policy*, no. 186, May/June 2011, pp. 54-63.

In this issue of FP magazine devoted to food, the author, president of the Earth Policy Institute, notes that rising global prices for staples do not affect those in the Western industrialized countries as much as they do in developing countries. For Americans, who spend

less than one-tenth of their income in the supermarket, the soaring food prices are an annoyance, not a calamity. But for the planet's poorest 2 billion people, who spend 50%-70% of their income on food, rising prices may mean going from two meals a day to one. From the Middle East to Madagascar, high prices are spawning land grabs and ousting dictators. Brown says that's why the food crisis of 2011 is for real, and why it may bring with it yet more bread riots and revolutions. The result is a world that looks strikingly different from the bountiful global grain economy of the last century. Farmers now face increasing pressure of population growth; each year 80 million additional people must be fed, nearly all of them in developing countries.

28. A ROADMAP FOR THE PLANET

By Bjorn Lomborg. Newsweek (International ed.), v. 157, no. 25, June 20, 2011.

Environmentalists argue that the industrialized countries of the world have made sizable "withdrawals" on nature's "fixed allowance"—that our current way of living is selfish and unsustainable. It is a compelling story, but fundamentally wrong. Would-be catastrophes have regularly been pushed aside throughout human history because of innovation and technological development. In recent decades, air and water quality in developed nations has vastly improved. The author writes that, over the past several hundred years, increasing incomes in the West were matched by increasing pollution. Eventually, however, with increased affluence, developed countries gradually were better able to afford a cleaner environment.

29. TURNING TO DUST

By Michael Tennesen. Discover, v. 31, no. 4, May 2010, pp. 66-72.

The author notes that dust storms have been occurring with greater severity and frequency around the world due to drought, rising temperatures and a shift from grasslands to shrubs. Tennesen writes that the problem has been building for decades—wars, energy exploration, agriculture, cattle grazing and development have broken up the soil surfaces in many arid regions and released massive quantities of dust into the atmosphere. Dust can travel large distances; dust storms originating in the Gobi Desert have blown across the Atlantic Ocean, via the Pacific and the United States. Windborne dust can carry toxic substances, such as heavy metals or pesticides from dried lake beds. Desertification has become most pronounced in northern China and in the Lake Chad region in northern Africa, and is shrinking the amount of arable land.

Tennesen writes that researchers are experimenting with various methods to slow erosion and encourage regrowth of native grasses in arid regions; better farming and grazing practices, less development and fewer off-road vehicles would also help stem the tide against dust.

U.S. SOCIETY, VALUES & POLITICS

30. HOW TO LAND YOUR KID IN THERAPY

By Lori Gottlieb. Atlantic Monthly, July/August 2011

Is it possible for parents to do too much for their children? Yes, says therapist and mother Lori Gottlieb. It is possible that parents, by trying to protect their children from unhappiness, deprive them of happiness as adults. Overprotected children grow into adults who think something must be terribly wrong when they experience the normal frustrations of life. Kids need exposure to discomfort, failure, and struggle to learn how to be resilient and persevere—qualities that lead to life fulfillment and success. And despite the spate of articles in recent years exploring why so many people in their 20s seem reluctant to grow up, the problem may be less that kids are refusing to separate and individuate than that their parents are resisting doing so. With families having fewer children and society offering less of a close-knit community, it may be that parents cling too closely to their children for companionship.

31. THE MAKING AND MEANING OF PUBLIC ART

By Juilee Decker. Choice, v. 48, no. 10, June 2011, pp. 1827-1830, 1832-1841.

To many Americans, public art invokes images of the paintings and murals that appeared in post offices and in other government buildings during the 1930s through the auspices of the Works Progress Administration or, more recently, through various neighborhood and school projects funded by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Chicago's network of public art is as vast as the city itself. In recent years, these projects have been accompanied with controversy generated by groups opposed to the expenditure of public funds on art, or who object to the subject matter of public art projects. The author, chair of the arts department at Georgetown College, writes that public art has emerged only recently as an academic field. In her essay, she tries to address all aspects of the debate, including funding, care and

maintenance/conservation, public art as related to environment, ecological art, earthworks, memory, commemorative events (especially prominent after 9/11 and other national tragedies) and the inevitable controversies.

32. THEY PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE

By Grant Wahl. Sports Illustrated, v. 114, no. 24, June 13, 2011, pp. 54-57.

Soccer has become the world's game except in the U.S. where baseball dominates. Although youth soccer leagues have achieved much popularity in the U.S., baseball teams still predominate and, in the major leagues, foreign players have become an important part of the game. Radio and television broadcasting has further encouraged the popularity of baseball to global audiences. The author notes that this is changing, as U.S. soccer teams have embarked on a global search for dual-passport foreign players who could make a difference for the American side. In 2011, of the sixty players in the U.S. men's soccer pool, at least 34, representing twenty countries, are first- or second-generation Americans or otherwise hold foreign passports.

33. WELCOME TO THE WORLD

By Grant Wahl. Sports Illustrated, v. 115, no. 5, August 8, 2011, pp. 36-40.

The author describes the Palestinian national soccer team and their campaign to qualify for the 2014 World Cup. For an ultimate long shot like Palestine, the World Cup is as much about political inclusion and global acceptance as it is about quixotic hopes of a title. The team includes two schoolteachers, a waterworks employee, more than a dozen other amateurs and a blond-haired American from Georgia with a Mohawk and a Southern drawl, Omar Juran. The World Cup has become a big-time event in the United States, a mainstream attraction that draws TV audiences comparable to those for the World Series and the NBA Finals. However, the World Cup isn't just a 32-nation tournament that takes place over the span of a month every four years. In fact, most countries call that event the World Cup finals to distinguish it from the marathon global qualifying campaign that lasts 29 months and involves more national teams than there are members of the United Nations. The U.S. enters its 16-game regional qualifying process next June. No single athletic event produces as many compelling stories involving nationalism, politics and Cinderella tales.

34. WHERE HAVE ALL THE WISE MEN GONE?

By Michael Meade. *Huffington Post*, September 11, 2011.

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/michael-meade-dhl/older-vs-elder_b_954780.html

Meade, founder of the Mosaic Multicultural Foundation, writes that "we live in a time of great forgetting"—in traditional cultures, elders were respected, as without their guidance, society could lose its way. In modern life, instead of growing "older and wiser, people simply can grow older and older ... when there is no genuine growth in growing older, aging can become all about loss." Meade writes that in a culture where older folk are in the majority, there "seems to be a lack of knowing elders who can recall essential things in the midst of the great crises troubling both nature and culture." He believes that the gridlock in the nation's capital, where the political parties "fight over who might be the 'adult in the room'" is symptomatic of a lack of genuine courage and vision among older folk. While the 1960s were characterized by a youth revolution, the current stalemate may involve an "elder awakening" to solve the multiple challenges facing us, such as poverty, joblessness, climate change and sustainability.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

35. LOOKING FOR GHOSTS

By Ann Finkbeiner. *Smithsonian*, v. 41, no. 7, November 2010, pp. 76-81.

International scientific teams are constructing massive installations that they hope will allow them to detect, capture and study sub-atomic particles. In European abandoned mines and in the depths of Antarctic ice, scientists are positioning equipment to detect neutrinos, subatomic particles hurling through the universe, a by-product of the sun's manufacture of energy. Neutrinos bombard Earth by the trillions each second, but efforts to detect them so far have spotted only the tiniest fraction of what exist in theory. The particles were first conceived in the 1930s during the dawn of the atomic age. Scientists observed that the disintegration of a radioactive atom was producing less energy than it had originally contained, and they conceived of neutrinos as particles that could account for this energy loss. If researchers are to fully understand the composition of the universe, they must learn more about neutrinos.

36. THE SCIENCE OF WHY WE DON'T BELIEVE SCIENCE

By Chris Mooney. Mother Jones, no. 95, June 2011, pp. 27-32.

Mooney, a science correspondent for *The American Prospect*, describes a number of psychological studies in which participants reject new scientific information based on long-held beliefs. "Motivated reasoning" (reasoning suffused with emotion) causes a subject to push away threatening information. There is a "confirmation bias"—we give greater heed to evidence that bolsters our beliefs; and a "disconfirmation bias"—we try to debunk arguments that we don't agree with. These "flight-or-fight" reflexes to uncomfortable information are not well-adapted to our information age, according to the University of Michigan researcher Arthur Lupia. Mooney writes that "if you want someone to accept new evidence, make sure to present it to them in a context that doesn't trigger a defensive, emotional response."

37. WHICH NATIONS ARE MOST AT RISK FROM CLIMATE CHANGE?

By Lisa Friedman. Scientific American online, posted February 24, 2011.

<http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=which-nations-most-risk-climate-change>

Global institutions charged with protecting the most vulnerable nations from the effects of climate change are facing a major dilemma of prioritization. Because there is no international consensus for ranking the possibilities and the funds to help cope with climate change are limited, notes the author, countries are already sparring over who will be considered the most vulnerable. The decision-making process will be fraught with conflict, writes Friedman, pointing out that many scientists consider China, susceptible to desertification, typhoons and sea level rise to be the world's most threatened nation, yet with a USD 5 trillion economy, it may be more able to cope with extreme events than poverty-stricken Bangladesh or low-lying Seychelles. Two recent studies have attempted to quantify the vulnerabilities of 233 nations, in order to be allocated scarce climate-change funding. However, the author notes, the multibillion-dollar Green Climate Fund established in Cancun, but the funding pledge is still unfulfilled; she warns that the world doesn't have much time to make choices.

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